

# HOW CAN I TAKE CARE OF MYSELF AND STAY HEALTHY AT HOME?



## from the headspace team, to you

It can feel stressful and overwhelming during an event like the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and we can all be affected differently. You might feel overwhelmed by the information, conversations and the increased levels of stress in your community. It can be hard to know what information to trust especially in a situation where things are changing so quickly. It can be helpful to keep up to date but it's also okay to switch off from the 24-hour media cycle if this is getting too much.

During this time some things in your life may be affected by attempts to contain the spread of the virus. You may have been looking forward to a gig or a trip that's been cancelled. You may be affected by school, university or your workplace temporarily closing. Or you may have a loved one who is directly affected by the virus.

We are #InThisTogether. While we are keeping physical distance, staying socially and emotionally connected to family, friends and community is more important than ever. headspace Mildura hopes this guide will provide some invaluable tips on how to take care of you and your mental health throughout these tough times.

### Tips to maintain a healthy headspace during this time:

- Be mindful of exposure to information through stories, traditional and social media. It can be helpful to take a break from the 24-hour news cycle.
- Do things that make you feel physically and emotionally safe, and connect with others who are helpful to your wellbeing
- Engage in activities that promote a sense of calm and feeling grounded (use of alcohol and other drugs can be counterproductive with this).
- headspaces' 7 tips for a healthy headspace demonstrate simple and effective things that can help people to create and maintain a healthy headspace, irrespective of whether they have been affected by COVID-19 or not. See information below for ideas of how to adopt the 7 tips from home!
- It can help to talk with a trusted adult if it all feels a bit much
- Reach out for additional support if you need – either locally or one of the digital mental health services available (See support guide)

## stay active

Although physical distancing has been recommended, this does not mean you have to cease all fitness activities – there are many ways you can stay fit and active at home!

### **STRONG BY ZUMBA YOUTUBE**

STRONG by Zumba is a combination of bodyweight, cardio, muscle condition and plyometric training which is synced to upbeat music! There are several at-home workout options which are available on YouTube that do not require any equipment. Options of workout durations include, 7 minutes, 20 minutes and 30-minute classes

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQkaczRlyBjI3UKBH59W3XQ/videos> or search STRONG by Zumba on YouTube

### **LES MILLS**

Les Mills is a class creator who is offering free classes on their streaming platform. All workout videos will be free of charge, and available 24/7 for access until the COVID-19 outbreak is over. The platform holds 95 video classes for Body Combat, Body Pump, cardio training and more!

Link: <https://watch.lesmillsondemand.com/at-home-workouts>

### **COREPOWER YOGA**

CorePower Yoga is offering free access to a selection of their online classes! This will be inclusive of yoga and meditation classes which will be facilitated by CorePower trainers.

Link: <https://www.corepoweryogaondemand.com/keep-up-your-practice>

### **9HONEY COACH**

9Honey Coach provides simple ways you can work on your fitness from the comfort of your home without equipment. These include videos focus on core, cardio and high-intensity interval training-style workouts that can be completed anywhere, with just 5 steps to follow.

Link: <https://coach.nine.com.au/5moves>

### **CENTR**

Centr is a personalised digital health and fitness program curated by Chris Hemsworth consisting of his hand-picked team of internationally renowned experts. Centr offers daily workouts, meal plans, meditations and a 24/7 community offering support, extra tips and exclusive behind-the-scenes extras. Currently offering 6-week free, offer valid till May 31<sup>st</sup>. **Subscription after 6 weeks comes at a cost.**

Link: <https://centr.com/join-us>

## mindfulness exercises

### Body Scan

During the body scan exercise, you will pay close attention to physical sensations throughout your body. The goal isn't to change or relax your body, but instead to notice and become more aware of it. Don't worry too much about how long you practice but do move slowly.

Begin by paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations such as warmth, coolness, pressure, pain, or a breeze moving over your skin. Slowly move up your body-to your calves, thighs, pelvis, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, and finally your head. Spend some time on each of these body parts, just noticing the sensations.

After you travel up your body, begin to move back down, through each body part, until you reach your feet again. Remember: move slowly, and just pay attention.

### Mindfulness Meditation

Find a place where you can sit quietly and undisturbed for a few moments. Begin by bringing your attention to the present moment by noticing your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and then leaves your body. Before long, your mind will begin to wander, pulling you out of the present moment. That's ok. Notice your thoughts and feelings as if you are an outside observer watching what's happening in your brain. Take note and allow yourself to return to your breathing.

Sometimes you might feel frustrated or bored. That's fine, these are just a few more feelings to notice. Your mind might start to plan an upcoming weekend or worry about a responsibility. Notice where your thoughts are going and accept what's happening.

Whenever you can, return your concentration to your breathing. Continue this process until your timer rings, or until you are ready to be done.

Use this exercise to quickly ground yourself in the present when you only have a moment. The goal is to notice something that you are currently experiencing through each of your senses.

#### Things you can see

Look around you and notice 5 things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.

#### Things you can smell

Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a nice smell either: maybe there's an overflowing trash

#### Things you can hear

Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street.

#### Things you can feel

Feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders, or the temperature on your skin. Pick up an object and notice its texture.

#### Things you can taste

Pop a piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes.

## sleep

Good sleep is like a mental health superpower. When you get enough sleep it's easier to manage your emotions: you have more patience and you deal with stressful situations better. Also, you reduce your risk of mental health challenges in the future!

Yet, it's so common to struggle to sleep. That's because your sleep can be affected by many things – from the food you eat to feeling worried or anxious and even using your phone before bed.

So...how much is enough? If you're aged between 12–17 then 8 to 10 hours sleep is ideal, while 18–25-year olds should try to get 7 to 9 hours. Keep in mind that different people need slightly different amounts of sleep.

### **THE BIG QUESTION – HOW DO I SLEEP BETTER?**

Michael Gradisar is a sleep expert from the Flinders University. Here are his quick tips for improving your sleep.

- At least an hour before bed, turn off video games, YouTube and social media. Try a movie, book or watch TV instead.
- Lower the brightness on your phone and computer screens at night. Apple's nightshift is one way to do this.
- If you find it hard to wind down, try a mindfulness exercise like one from the Smiling Mind app.
- Try to sleep the same amount every night. An extra hour, every now and then, is fine – but any more can confuse your body clock. Falling asleep one hour earlier is better than sleeping in one hour later.
- If you need to get up during the night, try to avoid turning on bright lights and hop back into bed quickly.
- Avoid caffeine at least six hours before you go to bed.
- If you can, avoid napping during the day.

## stay connected

Throughout this difficult period, we are told repeatedly to maintain and adopt social distancing for the safety of ourselves and others, however headspace Mildura adopts a very important rule:

### Social distancing ≠ social isolation

**Physical distancing** is an important factor contributing to the contagion of COVID-19, but it is important throughout times of isolation that we stay connected with family and friends. Staying connected can mean chatting to people via video call or audio call, email, or online chat. Healthy relationships are super important for your mental health. When you spend time with people you care about, who care about you, this can help you feel connected and supported.

Strong relationships can give you support when you need it and provide a sense of belonging and community. And when you spend time connecting with and supporting others, your wellbeing improves too!

#### Attend a Livestream concert

If you can't stand the idea of months at home without being able to get your live music fix, never fear. Global Citizen and the World Health Organisation's #TogetherAtHome concert series invites you to attend intimate shows with favourite artists... from the comfort of your living room. Catch [Chris Martin singing Coldplay classics](#) from his couch, sing along with [Hozier](#) or tune in for a live session with Neil Young. And the best bit? No waiting in line for the bathroom. Keep up to date with the latest couch tour announcements on the JAMBASE website or follow the #TogetherAtHome hashtag on social media.

#### MOVIE NIGHT WITH FRIENDS FROM HOME!

Google Chrome has an extension called 'Netflix Party' this will allow you to simultaneously stream Netflix with friends. You will have the ability to chat to each other in a chat window & play/pause for everyone in the group, so you all stay synced.

#### video chats

Video chats are a great way to stay in touch with friends and family! Step it up and host a digi-dinner to talk about life and what you have done throughout the week!

#### Online games

Did someone say game night!?

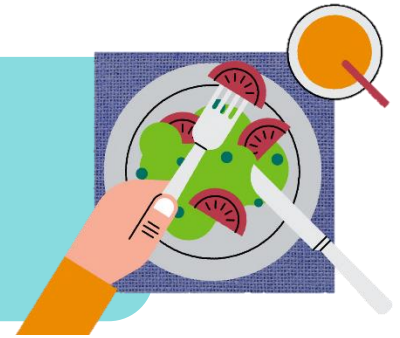
There are several games available online, either for free or of low costs.

- Settlers of Catan – Free on App Store or Google Play
- Monopoly – Free on App Store or Google Play
- Mario Kart Tour – Free, App Store or Google Play
- Words with Friends – Free on Facebook

## eating well

Here's how eating well can improve your headspace

- help you get a better night's sleep
- give you more energy
- improve your concentration
- make you less likely to crave foods with high sugar, salt or fat.



Professor Felice Jacka is Director of the Food and Mood Centre. Here are her tips to eating a healthier diet for your mental health:

- Often, we turn to unhealthy snacks when we are stressed. So, it's good to develop coping strategies that are not related to food, things like exercise or mindfulness.
- We know that some foods are very good for a healthy mind. So, make sure your diet includes things like colourful fruits and vegetables, foods high in fibre (wholegrain cereals and bread, beans, chickpeas, lentils and nuts), fermented foods like unsweetened yogurt, olive oil, and fish (tinned is fine).
- Make small changes that are easy to stick to. Start by swapping an unhealthy afternoon snack for a healthy one, like a piece of fruit.
- You don't have to be perfect, and don't be too hard on yourself. A burger or a chocolate bar are fine every now and then (say, once on the weekend) but it's important to make sure your diet includes a variety of nutritious foods, most of the time!
- Try to avoid too much red meat – a little bit is fine but keep it to 3-4 times per week.

### **Avoid alcohol or reduce your alcohol consumption**

Alcohol is not only a mind-altering and dependence-producing substance, harmful at any level consumed, but it also weakens the immune system. Thus, alcohol use, and especially heavy use, undermines your body's ability to cope with infectious disease, including COVID-19.

It is recommended that alcohol in general be avoided, but especially when in self-quarantine. As a psychoactive substance, alcohol also affects your mental state and decision-making and makes you more vulnerable to risks, such as falls, injuries, or violence when under quarantine with someone else. Alcohol consumption is also known to increase symptoms of depression, anxiety, fear and panic – symptoms that can intensify during isolation and self-quarantine.

### **Tips**

- Look for new recipes online and try them out in the kitchen!
- Try baking some healthy snacks, like sweet potato brownies or raw cakes
- healthdirect has a range of resources and information on healthy eating
- You can even learn more about nutrition and healthy eating on YouTube. Vloggers and channels like Madeleine Shaw, Green Kitchen Stories and Wild Dish will step you through how to make healthy food and snacks!

## grow

There is so much more to do when you're stuck at home than watch TV and clean. Productive activities such as learning a new language or developing new skills for free or of low costs is an option to pass time whilst developing professionally and personally.

### Enrol in a MOOC

Now's the perfect time to sign up for a MOOC (massive open online course). MOOCs are free courses offered by universities, colleges and other educational institutions from around the world, on subjects ranging from artificial intelligence and the biology of cancer, to understanding modern sculpture. You can do a whole course or a single subject.

You will have the opportunity to learn from top educators and collaborate with students from around the world. And, unlike traditional university courses, there are no entry requirements and no fees, although some providers may charge you, if you want an official certificate of completion. Platforms including [Coursera](#) and [edX](#) bring together MOOCs from around the world, including Australia.

### Refine your writing skills

For those scared of grammar and spelling, simply search for online writing groups and courses, which provide free resources including [Daily Writing Tips](#).

### Download a language app

Whether you want to order pasta in Italian or whisper sweet nothings to your lover in French, there are numerous online language courses, and many are free.

[Duolingo](#) combines free learning with an online game, where you lose a 'life' for every incorrect answer but score points and progress in the game for correct answers. It can help you learn to read, write, listen and speak your choice of more than 100 languages and its makers claim that 34 hours of Duolingo lessons are equal to one semester at university.



## apps



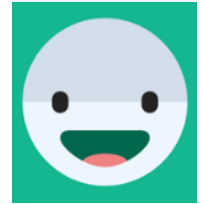
HEADSPACE

### HEADSPACE

Find calmness, wellness, and balance in your life with this app's guided meditation and mindfulness techniques for daytime use. Before bed, try any of its 10 new sleep music tracks or 16 nature soundscapes. The app builds personalized plans based on a little input from you, so you can learn the essentials of meditation and build from there.

### DAYLIO

Pick your mood and add activities you have been doing during the day. You can also add notes and keep an old school diary. Daylio is collecting recorded moods and activities in the statistics and calendar. This format will help you to understand your habits better. Keep track of your activities and create patterns to become more productive! You can review all entries in the statistics on charts or the calendar.



### CALM



An app for Sleep, Meditation and Relaxation. Join the millions experiencing better sleep, lower stress, and less anxiety with our guided meditations, Sleep Stories, breathing programs, stretching exercises, and relaxing music. Calm is the perfect mindfulness app for beginners, but also includes hundreds of programs for intermediate and advanced users. Sleep Stories are bedtime stories that are guaranteed to lull you into a deep and restful slumber. Drift off to dreamland and wake up refreshed.

### SMILING MIND

A FREE mindfulness meditation app developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to your life. Their programs are designed to assist people in dealing with the pressure, stress, and challenges of daily life. Put a smile on your mind today!



### FABULOUS

Join millions and create a healthier, happier life. Fabulous will help increase your energy levels, be more focused, lose weight and sleep better by building healthy habits and routines in your life. Fabulous takes a holistic approach to motivate you to be more productive and have higher energy. We're more than just a habit tracker, or a way to create new rituals; we're your own personal coach and happiness trainer.



## when should I get help?

If you ever feel unable to cope because of overwhelming or intense emotions, or if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, then ask for help immediately.

### 24/7 CRISIS SERVICES

- Lifeline: 13 11 14 or [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)
- Lifeline Text: 0477 131 114 (6pm- midnight), 7 days a week
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 or [suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)
- beyondblue: 1300 224 636 or [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)
- Mildura Base Hospital, Mental Health Service: (03) 5022 3500 or 1300 366 375

### ADDITIONAL YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

- headspace: visit [headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au) for eheadspace or more information
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 or [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)
- ReachOut: [reachout.com](http://reachout.com)
- SANE Australia: 1800 187 263 or [sane.org](http://sane.org)
- Mensline Australia: 1300 789 978
- Griefline: 1300 845 745
- Headtohealth: <https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

Talk with a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, school counsellor or contact us at headspace Mildura for additional support and/or other local support centres available! You can also speak to your local doctor or General Practitioner (GP) who will help make a plan for your recovery.

*Please note: The latest medical information is changing daily so if you suspect you are at risk or would simply like to understand COVID-19 more, visit the Department of Health's site. If you would like to understand or gather more resources on improving your mental health and wellbeing, visit [head to health](http://headtohealth.gov.au).*

## additional resources

- [headspace – Anxiety](#)
- [headspace – dealing with COVID stress](#)
- [BDI – Relaxation techniques](#)
- [FACE COVID](#)
- [CCI – Activities catalogue](#)
- [Deep breathing worksheet](#)
- [headspace – Depression](#)
- [Support for parents](#)
- [BDI – Self care planning](#)
- [APS – Dealing with COVID](#)
- [CCI – Sleep hygiene](#)
- [Stress management tips](#)